

IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel claims 31, 33-36 and 42 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend the claims as shown in the below attached LISTING OF CLAIMS.

Claims 1-4 (cancelled)

Claim 5 (previously presented): An isolated polynucleotide, comprising the nucleic acid sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 1.

Claims 6 and 7 (cancelled)

Claim 8 (previously presented) An isolated polynucleotide sequence, which encodes a polypeptide which comprises the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A recombinant coryneform bacterium comprising an isolated cstA gene having the polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, wherein said cstA gene encodes a polypeptide having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2, and wherein said recombinant bacterium is obtained after transformation with a vector comprising said cstA gene.

Claim 10 (currently amended): The coryneform bacterium according to claim 9, wherein the cstA gene is over-expressed by increasing the copy number of the cstA gene or by operably linking a promoter to the cstA gene.

Claim 11 (previously presented): The shuttle vector Escherichia coli DH5alphamcr/pEC-K18mob2cstAexp deposited as DSM 13671.

Claim 12 (withdrawn): A method for the fermentative preparation of L-amino acids in coryneform bacteria, comprising:

a) fermenting, in a medium, the coryneform bacteria which produce the desired L-amino acid and in which at least the *cstA* gene or nucleotide sequences which code for it are enhanced.

Claim 13 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, further comprising

b) concentrating the L-amino acid in the medium or in the cells of the bacteria.

Claim 14 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 13, further comprising

c) isolating the L-amino acid.

Claim 15 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein the L-amino acids are L-lysine.

Claim 16 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein at least the *cstA* gene or nucleotide sequences which code for it are over-expressed.

Claim 17 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein the bacteria comprise additional genes of the biosynthesis pathway of the desired L-amino acid are enhanced.

Claim 18 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein bacteria in which the metabolic pathways which reduce the formation of the desired L-amino acid are at least partly eliminated are employed.

Claim 19 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein a strain transformed with a plasmid vector is employed, and the plasmid vector carries the nucleotide sequence which codes for the *cstA* gene.

Claim 20 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein the expression of the polynucleotide which codes for the *cstA* gene is enhanced.

Claim 21 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 20, wherein the expression of the polynucleotide which codes for the *cstA* gene is over-expressed.

Claim 22 (withdrawn): A method according to claim 12, wherein the regulatory properties of the polypeptide for which the polynucleotide *cstA* codes are increased.

Claim 23 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein the bacteria being fermented comprise, at the same time, one or more genes which are enhanced; wherein the one or more genes is/are selected from the group consisting of:

- the *lysC* gene which codes for a feed back resistant aspartate kinase,
- the *dapA* gene which codes for dihydrodipicolinate synthase,
- the *gap* gene which codes for glycerolaldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase,
- the *pgk* gene which codes for 3-phosphoglycerate kinase,
- the *pyc* gene which codes for pyruvate carboxylase,
- the *tpi* gene which codes for triose phosphate isomerase,
- the *lysE* gene which codes for lysine export, and
- the *zwa1* gene which codes for the Zwa1 protein.

Claim 24 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 23, wherein the one or more genes are overexpressed.

Claim 25 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein the bacteria being fermented comprise, at the same time, one or more genes which are attenuated; wherein the one or more genes is/are selected from the group consisting of:

- the pck gene which codes for phosphoenol pyruvate carboxykinase,
- the pgi gene which codes for glucose 6-phosphate isomerase,
- the poxB gene which codes for pyruvate oxidase, and
- the zwa2 gene which codes for the Zwa2 protein.

Claim 26 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein microorganisms of the genus *Corynebacterium glutamicum* are employed.

Claim 27 (currently amended): A coryneform bacterium comprising a vector which ~~carries~~ comprises a polynucleotide according to claim 4 5.

Claim 28 (withdrawn): A method for discovering RNA, cDNA and DNA in order to isolate nucleic acids, or polynucleotides or genes which code for carbon starvation protein A or have a high similarity with the sequence of the cstA gene, comprising contacting the RNA, cDNA, or DNA with hybridization probes comprising polynucleotide sequences according to claim 1.

Claim 29 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 28, wherein the hybridization is carried out under a stringency corresponding to at most 2x SSC.

Claim 30 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 28, wherein arrays, micro arrays or DNA chips are employed.

Claim 31 (canceled)

Claim 32 (currently amended): An ~~isolate~~ isolated polynucleotide comprising a the complete complement of SEQ ID NO: 1.

Claims 33-36 (canceled)

Claim 37 (previously presented): An isolated polynucleotide consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1 or a fragment thereof which encodes a protein consisting of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

Claim 38 (currently amended) An isolated polynucleotide comprising nucleotides ~~100~~ 200 to 2515 of SEQ ID NO: 1.

Claim 39 (currently amended): An isolated polynucleotide consisting of at least 30 consecutive nucleotides selected from SEQ ID NO: 1 or a the complete complement of SEQ ID NO: 1.

Claim 40 (previously presented): The isolated polynucleotide according to claim 39, wherein the polynucleotide is a primer or a probe.

Claim 41 (currently amended): A recombinant bacterium comprising the isolated polynucleotide of claim 5, wherein said recombinant bacterium is obtained after transformation with a vector comprising said polynucleotide.

Claim 42 (canceled)

Claim 43 (previously presented): A bacterium comprising the isolated polynucleotide of claim 37.

Claim 44 (currently amended): A recombinant bacterium comprising the isolated polynucleotide of claim 38, wherein said recombinant bacterium is obtained after transformation with a vector comprising said polynucleotide.

Claim 45 (previously presented): A bacterium comprising the isolated polynucleotide of claim 39.

Claim 46 (currently amended): A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of any one of claims 5, 8, 37 or ~~31 to~~ 38.

Claim 47 (currently amended): A recombinant bacterium comprising the isolated polynucleotide of claim 8, wherein said recombinant bacterium is obtained after transformation with a vector comprising said polynucleotide.